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Reflections on the Decline of the Victorian

Values in Charles Dickens' Novella

A Christmas Carol

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Dedication 1

I humbly dedicate this work to: my parents, my wife, and my three children;

Abdessamia, Abdelhai and Baraa.

To my brothers, sisters, and my boss at work; Mr. Bensaci Idriss for
understanding and helping me.

Dedication 2

I would like to dedicate this modest work to my dear parents, wife, sisters and children for their love, patience, encouragement, and help.

I would like also to thank all my friends and the staff of my work.

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Abstract

This study seeks to address the problem of the decline of values in Victorian England. It reveals the difference in social status as reflected in *A Christmas Carol*. The objective of this study is to shed light on the factors that led to the decline of human values in the Victorian era. It also aims to analyze the structural elements of the novel based on Marxist approach. This study also intends to explore the attitudes of Charles Dickens towards the decline of values. Furthermore, this study aims to answer the research questions set at the beginning of the study on how the reflections of the decline of values are featured in *A Christmas Carol*. In this regard, the researcher opted for a qualitative method to analyze the elements of the novel. The data used in this study are primary and secondary. The primary data source is the novel of *A Christmas Carol*. The secondary data sources are other related sources to the primary source including books, journal articles, essays, and website articles on the author's biography, history of Britain, and the Marxism approach in literature. The research findings show that Charles Dickens uses the concept of time to emphasize that people can change across the years as it is the case for Scrooge. Dickens also reflects that the difference in social classes can be eradicated because Christmas day is a happy day for all people alike. As a conclusion, *A Christmas Carol* appears to deliver a hidden message about the importance of values and moral standards in the establishment of societies.

Key words: social classes, Marxist approach, Victorian values, social reflections, decline of values

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the Study

As many scholars and literary analysts state, the Victorian Era witnessed a great deal of social, economic and political changes. It spanned the duration of Queen Victoria's rule from 1837 to 1901. This period was essentially characterized by an expansion in literature and education, economic growth, technological discovery, and industrialization. "We are living in an age of transition", John Stuart Mill .In this light, many writers reacted to the wonders of Victorian society as well as to the troubles that shaped that era. At that time, literature became more prevalent in society reflected in monthly installments such as news articles, poetry, Christmas tales, and satiric essays. In this framework, realism emerged as a notable literary characteristic and was reflected in the works of many writers including George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Oscar Wilde and Charles Dickens (The Victorian Web).

Shortly after Prince Albert, Queen Victoria's husband has brought the Christmas tree from his native Germany in 1841; the Christmas notion became popular among the British people. Dickens through his tale of endless Christmas spirits, *A Christmas Carol* (1843) established the modern spirit of Christmas imported the three ghosts of his story the Past Ghost, the Present Ghost, and the Ghost of Yet to Be from early legend and folklore rather than the Christian Gospel (Sutherland).

A Christmas Carol (1843) is a great introduction to Dickens's style with his way of looking at the world in a dramatic raising of the eyebrows and a comic squint. Dickens addresses a timeless problem of the decline of values and the emergence of social issues such as child labouring, poverty, industrialization, the discrimination among social classes, and capital flight. *A Christmas Carol* was written in an age when inhumanity and bitterness prevail.

2. Statement of the Problem

This study is of a paramount importance because it sets the problem of the decline of values and the rise of capitalism during the Victorian age. It also, sheds light on the effects of the industrial revolution on the economic, political, and social sectors that shaped the Victorian era. The major gap this study attempts to fill is: "how is the difference in social status reflected in Charles Dickens novel, *A Christmas Carol*".

3. Aims of the Study

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To shed light on the factors that led to the downfall of human values and in the Victorian period.
- 2) To analyze the structural elements of the novel bases on Marxist approach.
- 3) To analyze Scrooge's character as and the immoral values he presents.
- 4) To reflect the attitudes of Charles Dickens towards the decline of values.

4. Research Questions

This study intends to answers the following research questions:

- 1) What shapes the Victorian era and distinguishes it from any other periods in Britain's history?
- 2) What are Dickens' reflections on the novel regarding the decline of values?

5. Significance of the Study

This study includes a detailed analysis on the theme of the decline of values under the Marxist approach. By using this approach, the concept of capitalism and its reflections on the rise of industrialization and the decline of social values will be discussed. This study attempts to examine Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* from a Marxist perspective. The type of this research is exploratory which may encourage future researchers and academics to carry out further studies in this regard.

6. Structure of the Research

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is mainly theoretical. It summarizes and cites previous researches on the topic and it is called literature review. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section displays the historical background of the Victorian Era including life, culture, literature, and the emergence of the industrialization. The second section, however, presents a short biography about the writer and his reaction towards the decline of values. Also, previous studies conducted on the analysis of the novel are mentioned.

The second chapter of this research sets out the writing background of the novel. Also, it defines the Marxist approach, its influence on Charles Dickens' writings, and the Marxist features reflected in the novel *A Christmas Carol*. The third chapter is a corpus analysis of the structural elements of the novel. It attempts to analyze the main character of the novel, Ebenezer Scrooge and discusses the development of his character in relation to the social circle. Furthermore, it discusses Charles Dickens' attitudes towards the decline of values as personified in Scrooge.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Decline of Values in the Victorian Age

Introduction

A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens' most prominent work of the 19th century confirms Dickens to be the storyteller of his age and for ages to come. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section attempts to shed light on the Victorian age and its social, economic, and political aspects, along with the effects of the industrial revolution on the decline of values. The second section, however, attempts to present a brief biography on the writer, along with his reaction towards the decline of values as reflected in the novel. Also, previous studies on a Christmas carol are discussed.

Section I: The Victorian Age

1. Life and Culture in the Victorian Age

Queen Victoria ruled England for sixty three years and two hundred sixteen days. A Goddess as a child, a queen at eighteen, a celebrity soon thereafter. She was an object of speculation and veneration, gossip and legend even in her own time. In her book *Becoming Victoria* (2008), biographer Kate Williams describes the unexpected rise of Britain's greatest monarch. Williams describes being a queen as much demanding and kind of an uneven task, but young Victoria proved this claim wrong. "In order to be queen, Victoria had to navigate prejudices, the unfriendliness of her relations, and her mother's quest for power. We have a vision of her as dreary and stolid, the embodiment of stoic virtue and repressively moralistic views. But as a girl, she was passionate, impulsive, and eager for gaiety" (30). A dedicated queen with a heart of a nation captivated the hearts of her subjects

and brought Britain to the bright edge of the world. Victoria stood at the most dangerous intersections in history, that of women and power. In an age when women rulers were no rarity, she stood out. In this context, Williams elaborates on Victoria as the heroine of her age:

The idea of Victoria, young, fresh, liberal, and seemingly concerned with the plight of her people, kept the British hopeful throughout the largely appalling reigns of George IV and William IV. When she became queen at the age of eighteen years, three weeks and three days, an era of drunken, selfish kings who cared only for their own privilege came to a much-needed end .(30)

With the coming of Queen Victoria, a new era begun and Britain was never the same. The Victorian age, spanning the rule of Victoria, Britain's second longest serving monarch from 1837 to 1901 was characterized by the expanding horizons of education and literacy, as well as by an increased desire of the people to question religion and politics (Greenblatt 993, *British Literature Wiki*). As John Stuart Mill says: "we are living in an age of transition", the Victorian Era witnessed a great deal of change in politics, literature, economy and for the most part, society. In her article *Overview of the Victorian Era (2001)*, Anne Shepherd sheds light on the transformations that shaped that period of time. According to Shepherd, Britain's place in the world was related to the economic boom and prosperity that marked the Victorian age. However, it led to the rise of uncertainty and pessimistic view towards Britain as most historians associate the nineteenth century with the Protestant work ethic, family values, religious observation and institutional faith.

Sixty years of reign was a breathtaking era of change, an unrelenting rush of new technology, new knowledge, new opportunities, new wealth, new politics, and new attitudes. In this light, academic Michael Paterson introduces the history of that tremendous

era in his book entitled *A Brief History of Life in Victorian Britain* (2008). According to Paterson, the Victorian age witnessed an immense transformation, not since the Civil War two and a half centuries earlier. Everything had undergone change, “society altered so greatly in a short time. Never before had the mechanics of living, the way in which people travelled, communicated, shopped, dealt with sickness, preserved food- undergone such revolution”(12-13).Unlike their Georgians grandfathers, Victorians’ Golden Age was demolished by modification and improvement in an unexpected way. Paterson describes the British as: “gentler, more generous and more civilised”, alongside the rise of science social consciousness and literature which became a serious industry during Victoria’s reign (14).

What is more that can be said about the wonders of the Victorian age? During that time, the British achieved a high level of wealth, confidence, and success. When discussing the Victorian age, it is often referred to the lands over which Queen Victoria reigned, but historians in general described it as the hotbed of invention around the world, especially in America and throughout Europe.

2. The Victorian Novel: Pioneers of Great Literature

According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, the term *Victorian* refers to the period of British history between the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837 and her death in January 1901. In literature, the chronology is complicated by the usually agreed completion of the previous ‘Romantic’ period at either 1830 with the death of George IV or at 1832 with the Great Reform Act and the death of Walter Scott: this would leave all or most of William IV’s reign (1830–37), during which Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning began their literary careers, lost to literary history, but for the common expedient of treating it and the earliest works of those poets as ‘Victorian’. The literary achievements

of the period, aside from Tennyson's and Browning's work, belong mostly to the realm of prose, as with the novels of Dickens, Thackeray, the Brontë Sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy (426).

As literature was an accessible and pervasive part of Victorian society, studying it is crucial in understanding the attitudes of the people who lived during that era. Most Victorian scholars notice that writing during that period of time was a reaction to the rapidly changing notions of science, morality and society (The British Literature Wiki). With the rise of reading among the British citizens, the careers of many distinguished writers have been launched.

No nineteenth century novelist, not even Tolstoy, was stronger than Charles Dickens, whose wealth of invention almost rivals Chaucer and Shakespeare. In his research paper entitled *A Sociological Analysis of the Novels of Charles Dickens (1977)*; James Melville Brown explores the maturity of Dickens' novels which reflect the nature of his society during Mid-Victorian time in a creative and critical reflection. Brown states that Dickens' novels almost reflect the essential condition of social relations within a whole society and a generalising level of insight. He mentions that the main concern of Dickens' realistic method is a critical evaluation of the general social condition within the industrial system (2). Furthermore, Brown reinforces on the Dickensian attitude towards the mid-Victorian middle classes:

“For although Dickens was lionised by a predominantly middle-class reading public and always wrote in accordance with middle class standards of propriety and delicacy, and despite his utilisation of selected middle class values as moral positives and structural organizing agents within his novels, Dickens cannot be satisfactorily labelled as a *bourgeois* writer or apologist. Indeed he uses the traditional entrepreneurial middle class values as an earlier age of English capitalist development to implicitly criticize the contemporary social and economic

experience of mid Victorian middle class itself, towards whom his novels are increasingly hostile” .(2)

Furthermore, the complex and uneasy stand of Dickens in mid-Victorian society resulted in characteristic tensions and inconsistencies in his novels. Therefore, a lack of resolution between a tragic social vision and the demands of happy closed plot ending (2). For obvious reasons, Dickens used his comic squint to paint a dramatic portrait of the mid Victorian age as no other writer of his age did.

On the other hand, Robert Douglas Fairhurst, an Oxford professor describes in his book *Becoming Dickens (2011)* the great impact Dickens made on the period, and why the aftershocks of this impact continue to reverberate. He describes:” we need to know that he was one of hundreds of ambitious writers swept along by the uncertain currents of the 1830s, who bobbed into view or sank without trace in ways that baffled prediction” (13). For Dickens, he was the most central and eccentric literary figure of the age. Nobody could write like Dickens. Even Dickens sometimes found himself unable to reproduce his earlier styles (20).

Fairhurst also mentions that one of the reasons that made Dickens describe London’s crowds so brilliantly was that he wrote about them with an insider’s knowledge (13). The result of this man’s dramatic view of the world is ones of literature greatest narratives, and it was clearly depicted in *Great Expectations*, *Hard Times*, *Oliver Twist* and *A Christmas Carol*. “As a matter of fact, no writer of any period is more closely identified with the time of place in which he lived, which is why Victorian and Dickensian have become more or less interchangeable terms”. He reinforces: “as a writer, Dickens came to embody the defining values of his age: its irresistible energy, poverty, its self-divisions and self doubts, its urgent striving for something beyond the present” (Fairhurst 13). And that what makes Dickens the man of his epoch.

Another fine author of the nineteenth century in which her writings were a reaction to the industrialization that took place in Britain is Elizabeth Gaskell, the author of *North and South* (1855). The novel is considered one of the industrial novels that reflect the agonies of that era such as poverty, child labour, the position of women, marriage and social unrest in the shadow of the industrialization age in England. In his literary research paper entitled *The Industrial Novels* (2015), Cambridge scholar Mehmet Akif Balkaya argues: “in *North and South*, Elizabeth Gaskell criticized the harsh reality of the British citizens. She reflects the themes of love, education, class struggles, and strikes that lead to violence” (X, preface). According to Balkaya, the industrial revolution and its social aftermath had turned society upside down which put the novelist into indecisive feelings towards rioting workers as reflected through her characters (X).

Moreover, talking about Victorian literature without mentioning the author who gave us an immortal masterpiece, *Jane Eyre* is of no use. Charlotte Brontë with her outstanding narratives manifests the difficulties of that time in her novel *Shirley* in which she narrates the plight of workers and the difficulties encountered in factories. Class struggle was the most delicate issue that shaped the Victorian era and became the main theme of writing for many distinguished authors including herself. In *Jane Eyre* (1847), Jane acted as the appealing voice of women over the authority of men. Brontë Writes: “I am no bird and no net ensnares me. I am a free human being with an independent will” (Bronte 6). “Bronte’s plain, passionate, and intelligent heroine enlists her readers to follow her emotional development and her relationships, and through these to sympathize and empathize with the plight of women of her class and the inequalities in the lives of young girls and women. Unlike many contemporary male authors who presented female characters as general figures of aesthetic beauty or morality” (*The Literature Book*). The works of English novelist and poet Thomas Hardy are the best manifestation of that era’s magical

realism and the moral values that shaped it. An entry in Hardy's notebook dated April 1878 gives us a clue to the guiding principle behind his fiction:

“A Plot, or Tragedy, should arise from the gradual closing in of a situation that comes of ordinary human passions, prejudices, and ambitions, by reason of the characters taking no trouble to ward off the disastrous events produced by the said passions, prejudices, and ambitions”. (The Victorian Web)

Another Victorian novelist with her rhetorical art in storytelling is George Eliot. In his book *The Western Canon (1994)*, literary critic Harold Bloom mentions of Eliot, “even though she is not a great stylist, she advances her novels into the mode of moral prophecy” (Bloom 320). Eliot’s central work is *Middlemarch*, in which she depicts the Victorian society at its best. Bloom says” In *Middlemarch (1830)*, Eliot addresses a huge representation of an entire provincial society set in the age of reform that began the Victorian era, and the idea of a societal hope is counterpointed throughout the novel with the painful moral education of the protagonists” (322).

To sum up, these greatest names of Victorian literature used their literary talents as a tool to depict the real life events as a part of the British citizens during Mid-Victorian period. Balkaya quotes of Humphreys (395), “Victorian novelists such as Dickens, Gaskell, and Charlotte Bronte drew attention to the necessity of reforms as far as the living conditions of the poor working class were concerned. Also, an invitation for both the middle class and the working class to develop better communication with each other as a way towards finding a solution” (2).

3. The Industrial Revolution (1780 – 1850): The Rise of Science and the Decline of Human Values

The industrial revolution, which started in Britain before sweeping through Europe and the United States, is traditionally viewed as the deepest mutation ever known to have affected men since Neolithic times. In her book *Understanding the Victorians Politics, Culture and Society in 19th Century Britain* (2017), Professor Susie L. Steinbach describes the beginning of a new age shadowed by industrialization. She states “the critical precursor to the Victorian period was the industrialization that took place in Britain. This process has been referred to as the industrial revolution” (85). According to *Oxford English Lexico Dictionary*, the term *industrialization* refers to “the development of industries in a country or region on a wide scale”. Susie reinforces that the term *industrialization* implies sudden and drastic changes.

In *A New Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture* by Herbert F. Tucker (2014), Herbert Sussman describes the process in which England had undergone as the Early Industrial England. Sussman clarifies that this unprecedented phenomenon changed the way the world views England forever. “With the transformation of Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Bradford and Leeds from small villages to smoky cities, new technologies and economic system have emerged” (Sussman.249). Furthermore, this expansion of new industrial cities resulted in rural citizens leaving their agriculture life in England, and sailing from impoverished Ireland in search of a new way of life. Sussman argues: “under this process, the desire was to replace hand labour by machines” (250).

For more than a century, a new lifestyle was waving in the horizon, the British found themselves obliged to either adapt or being adapted by the new economic and social systems. As with the rise of industrialization, the capitalism dominance was no rarity. The

struggle between the upper class and the middle class increased and that what inspired the writers of that age to bring the current events into the world of literature. In his article entitled *Why Did the Industrial Revolution Start in Britain?* , Researcher Lief Van Neuss states that Britain was completely changed by the industrial revolution that shaped its economic and social structures, “it eventually modified every aspect of people’ daily life. Thanks to the introduction of new high-impact inventions into the world of production, this emerged in changing the intellectual environment and releasing the human’s power in a new spectacular way “(Neuss 1). This conflict between a small, conservative state and the explosive forces of change unleashed by the industrial revolution, continued throughout Victoria’s reign (1).

According to *the English Heritage Encyclopedia*, the 1840s were the years of a delicate time in the life of the British subjects. Historians called them “the hungry forties”. As famine extended in Ireland during the 1845-1849 known as the Irish Famine, over a million people died and another two million emigrated, “ it was shocking that this could occur in the most prosperous and progressive nation in the world, as Britain enjoyed greater prestige than any other country of its age”(The English Heritage Encyclopedia).

The Victorian age seemed eternally to shine as advances achieved in science, technology engineering and medicine were staggering. Another aspect of human life was revealed during that period of time, “this was an age that changed the way human life was perceived, great scientific leaps often resulted in a crisis of religious faith. Yet it was also an age that saw the greatest burst of church building and foundation of charitable institutions since the middle Ages” (*The English Heritage Encyclopedia*).

In and through the Victorian era, industrialization made a rapid progress that had such negative social, political and economic effects on a wide scale. Balkaya explores and

analyzes the industrial revolution and its effects on the social and economic agenda of the Victorian era, and how great writers reflect this tremendous transition on their literary pieces. The negative aspects of an industrialized society are portrayed using characters from different backgrounds. The most famous work that portrayed the life under the shadow of industrialization is Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*, the most pessimistic of all his novels. As stated in Balkaya (13), "Dickens' *Hard Times* is reviewed in terms of cause and effect relationships of class struggle. As the social conditions depicted in the novel, seem to be shaped by the economic conditions, social and cultural norms such as art, religion, education and literature" (Tyson 53).

The industrial revolution brought new developments in manufacturing, relying heavily on the machines and neglecting the working hands of the poor, hence, decreasing the need for manual labour leading the life of many people to the gallows. Professor Marion Gymnich states in her research paper entitled *Social Criticism in Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol (2017)*, the huge effects of the industrialization on changing the social norms and leading to the downfall of values that were once the essence of Victorian society. Gymnich describes that many writers including Charles Dickens expressed their negative attitudes towards the industrial revolution and attributed the suffering of the lower class to its severe consequences, as poverty spread over the country and has left no room for survival, but emigration (3).

Many pieces in literature in the Victorian era had a dual nature. As their purpose was to entertain, they mainly aimed at informing readers and shed light on social conformity.

Section II: Charles Dickens and the Victorian Values

Victorian writers can be divided into three categories: the early Victorians, the mid Victorians and the late Victorians. The early Victorians include William Makepeace Thackeray, who portrays the upper-middle class as a cruel, ruthless society and Elizabeth Gaskell, who describes the conflicts between workers and employers in industrial towns, but Charles Dickens is one of the most famous and outstanding authors from that period and he is an example of an early Victorian writer. In his novels, he often uses realism as a way to deal with problems like poverty, homelessness, and bad education. Despite these themes, his novels have almost always a happy ending, where good triumphs over evil. So, who is Charles Dickens and what are his contributions to literature?

1. Charles Dickens: A Biography

“Of all English novelists, Dickens is the strongest in his narratives that absorb the Shakespearean wealth. Perhaps Richardson, Henry James, and James Joyce in their different ways surpassed aspects of Dickens, but he triumphs over them in his universality, where only Shakespeare and Cervantes can be said to overshadow him” (Bloom 1). In his book entitled *Bloom’s Classic Critical Views: Charles Dickens (2008)*, literary critic Harold Bloom advocates the world of Dickens and his wealth of invention.

“Charles Dickens was born in Landport, Portsmouth, England, on February 7 1812. The family moved to London in 1814, to Chatham in 1817, and then back to London in 1822. In 1824, Dickens’ parents had to put him to work at shoe- blacking warehouse due to financial difficulties. After studying at the Wellington House Academy in London from 1824 to 1827, Dickens worked as a solicitor’s clerk and then became a reporter for the *Morning Chronicle* from 1834 to 1836. He published his first novel *The Pickwick Papers*

in twenty monthly installments in 1836 and in a constructed novel the year after. Also in 1836, Dickens married Catherine Hogarth. They had ten children by the time they separated in 1858” (Bloom 1).

“As Dickens worked as an editor, he then published his later novels in monthly installements and then later appeared in book form including *Oliver Twist* (1837), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840), *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *David Copperfield* (1849), *Hard Times* (1854), and *Great Expectations* (1861). During these years of intense productivity, Dickens also found time to direct amateur theatrical productions, sometimes of his own plays. He also became involved in a variety of philanthropical activities, gave public readings, and in 1867–68 visited the United States for a second time. Dickens died suddenly on June 9, 1870, leaving his last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, unfinished” (Bloom 2).

Despite Dickens’s great popularity both during and after his own life, it was not until the twentieth century that serious critical studies began to appear. “Modern critical opinion has tended to favour the later works, which are more somber and complex, over the earlier ones, which are characterized by boisterous humour and broad caricature” (Bloom 2).

2. Charles Dickens’ Reaction to the Victorian Values

Charles Dickens with his social criticism represents the harsh reality of that era in his most beloved work *A Christmas Carol*. The main character of the novel Ebenezer Scrooge acts as the main symbol of cruelty with a representation of unethical behaviours towards his social circle. He depicts the cruel capitalism system. As Dickens’ belief grew constantly that the industrial revolution was the root of all social evil, Gymnich (6) states: “*A Christmas Carol* was first intended to be a pamphlet about his observation of the cruelty

of child labour. His idea then turned into a novel that prompted to restore kindness and humanity within Victorian society” (Cook Jr. 109).

In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens addresses the themes of Christmas spirit, redemption, and social injustice. Dickens also deals with the themes of family and forgiveness. There are many themes running through Dickens’s famous characters that depict the themes of greediness, forgiveness, and tricky concepts of time, as well as themes of generosity and compassion. The theme of Christmas, however, represents the Christian celebration of the birth of Christ, though it also encompasses Greek, Roman, and Pagan traditions giving gifts and feasting around the winter solstice. It is the time when families and friends come together to share food and exchange gifts.

When Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol*, he considered the immorality of his society at that time. Throughout the eyes of his characters, Dickens became the artist of a psychological masterpiece addressing humanity at all its best. In his journal article entitled *The Analysis of Charles Dickens' Novel A Christmas Carol from the Essence of the Novel to Western Culture (2017)*, Liwei Sun advocates on the spirituality of Dickens’ work and the evaluation of values that were altered by the rise of a new system, that of the capitalism, and how Dickens brought both humanity and Christmas into the heart of society once more. Sun states:

“We can take advantage of humanitarianism to eliminate hatred; we can use it to love, to forgive others. We can also use it to alleviate and remove the conflict between different social classes. Christmas Spirit promotes that people should be tolerant and respectful with each other: the poor should not lose their personality and dignity, while the rich should not lose their generosity and they should treat the poor kindly and respectfully”. (253)

Dickens succeeded in resurrecting the moral values that shaped Victorian society once, and this is what makes Charles Dickens one of the titans of the 19th century who enjoyed a greater prestige than any other writer of his age.

3. *A Christmas Carol*: Previous Studies

The story of Ebenezer Scrooge and the three spirits of Christmas has been the subject of research by literary scholars for decades. As Virginia Woolf once said, “It is one of those stories that we know even before we learned how to read”. Dickens’ masterpiece is not a mere story about a jolly season. However, it addresses a timeless issue that is the downfall of values and the discrimination among social classes in Victorian Britain society.

When Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* back in 1843, he realized that the story of Scrooge and the three ghosts of Christmas would transport readers from both sides of Atlantic to the magical world of Victorian England, yet a world that was shadowed by bitterness and lower values. The novel contains many aspects that researchers find them interesting to be studied. In this context, there are two finest researchers who studied *A Christmas Carol*. The first researcher was Sunarsasi under the title of *The Cold and Closed Heart Character of Ebenezer Scrooge, the Main Character in Charles Dickens (2002)*. In this study, Sunarsasi analyzes the novel through a psychoanalytical approach. The researcher put under light the character of Scrooge using the Freudian Method for analyzing the internal and external image of the human’s personality. On the other hand, Elfina’s study of the novel entitled *An Analysis of Moral Lessons in Charles’ Dickens’ A Christmas Carol (2010)* focuses on the analysis of good and bad person’s attitude of the main character as an antagonist of his social circle based on the extrinsic approach.

However, the current study aims at studying the novel from a Marxist approach in terms of the development of the main character related to his social circle and how his

immorality affected the way he lived and worked. In addition, the study employs a descriptive analysis to analyze the research data.

Conclusion

The period of the first half of the 19th century was a rich ground and a great source of inspiration for many great writers. This chapter explored the Victorian age with its entire economic, political and social agenda through the works of many distinguished writers including Charles Dickens. The next chapter, however, presents the Marxist approach in which this novel will be analyzed upon. Also, the features of Marxist reflected in *A Christmas Carol* are discussed.

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CHAPTER TWO

The Marxist Approach in *A Christmas Carol*

Introduction

The second chapter of this study intends to shed light on the writing background of the novel, *A Christmas Carol*. It also attempts to identify the different features of the novel, the author's social status related to the novel and for the most part, define the Marxist approach that this study will be analyzed upon.

1. A Christmas Carol: Writing Background

The starving orphan, the spinster waiting in her wedding dress, and the stone-hearted miser plagued by the ghost of Christmas past. More than a century after his death, these remain recognizable figures from the works of Charles Dickens, the man who made it all. But what are the features of Dickens' writing that make it so special?

As stated in *The British Library*, Charles Dickens is perhaps as famous today as he was in his lifetime, the author of fifteen novels, five novellas, and countless stories and essays, he also generously promoted the careers of other novelists in his weekly journals, and concerned himself with social issues. He excelled in writing about London settings and grotesque and comic characters such as Oliver Twist, Miss Havisham, the Artful Dodger, Scrooge, and Pip among his greatest creations. Charles was born in Portsmouth in 1812, son of John Dickens, a feckless and improvident navy clerk with a great love for literature, and his wife Elizabeth. Charles drew an ironically affectionate portrait of them in Mr and Mrs Micawber (*David Copperfield*). A happy childhood in Chatham, during which he read

voraciously, ended with a move to London in 1822. Family poverty meant the young Charles had to earn money, and he spent a humiliating year labelling bottles in a blacking factory. During this period, his father was imprisoned for debt. Both experiences informed later novels (*The British Library*).

In his book *A Christmas Carol*, the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, the stone-hearted man with a will of an iron institutionalised what one could call “the modern spirit of Christmas”. Dickens subtitled his story “A Ghost Story for Christmas” in which the ghosts were imported from folklore and legend rather than the Christian Gospels (Sutherland). *A Christmas Carol* was originally published in 1843 as one of the five Christmas books by the greatest representative of social realism. The other four Christmas books are *The Chimes*, *The Cricket on the Hearth*, *The Battle of Life and the Haunted Man* (Sun 252). He mentions: “those stories possess a profound symbolic meaning and promote the development of Christmas which can be seen more obviously in *A Christmas Carol*”. Therefore, Dickens is honoured as the man who invented Christmas” (252). Since that time reading *A Christmas Carol* became one of the sacred traditions among the British people and all around the world.

Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* in the second period of his creation between 1842 and 1858. During this period of time, Britain witnessed huge distress among the working classes and mass starvation in Ireland. “As Chartism, a working class reformist movement raised the fearful possibility of revolution (Sutherland). As a social reformer, Dickens wrapped his criticism in an entertaining Christmas story inviting his readers to form their own understanding of what society was lacking” (Gymnich 2). She adds: “*A Christmas Carol* was written when Charles Dickens himself was faced with bankruptcy. Luckily, the novel was such a success that Dickens and his family could survive the severe consequences

of being in debt” (2). The result of being heavily in debt was to end up in a workhouse or prison which was the destiny of Dickens’ father leaving the family shattered.

The life experiences of Charles Dickens contributed enormously to his writing of many books including *A Christmas Carol*. “Between 1842 and 1858, he visited some Capitalist countries such as USA and Italy. Before his visit, Dickens thought of the USA as a world which there was no class divisions, but his optimism was shaken when he witnessed the enormous rule of dollars and the corrupting influence of wealth and power” (Sun 252). At that delicate time, Dickens began to realize that the brightness of Capitalism started to be covered with shadows and that its benevolence started to be replaced by cruelty and coldness (Gymnich 13). This discovery was not only the start of a long life of social reform, but rather a turning point of his writing. Dickens became the 19th century voice for social reforms.

In *A Christmas Carol*, the themes of bitterness and greediness take place in a society in which the character is a member. Therefore, the social environment of the work concerning characters is important. “The book opens with Ebenezer Scrooge, an antagonist of his social circle in his chilly counting house on Christmas Eve (stave one). That Christmas Eve, Scrooge alone in his cold empty house after dismissing his clerk Bob Cratchit was destined to be haunted. First by the ghost of his best friend and partner in business, Marley who was doomed to wander the earth forever for his hard-heartedness, and later by the three spirits of Christmas” (Sutherland). This visit changed the way Scrooge lived and worked and changed the fate of a very tiny character.

Dickens’ most notable work has drawn the attention of readers into the plight of social status in that period of time. Sutherland elaborates: “the modern reader of whatever age is less sensitive to sentimentality than our Victorian forebears”. Moreover, “Dickens’

audiences would regularly be moved to open tears by, for example, the death of Little Nell in *The old Curiosity Shop*, or the murder of Nancy in *Oliver Twist*. One suspects that many Victorian tears were shed over the foreseen, but happily forestalled death of Tiny Tim". In this context, Dickens' biographer, Michael Slater describes:

"Dickens dwelt on the terrible sights he had seen among the juvenile population in London's jails and doss-houses and stressed the desperate need for educating the poor. This occasion seems to have put into his mind the idea for a [Christmas Eve tale] which should help to open the hearts of the prosperous and powerful towards the poor and powerless but which should also bring centrally into play the theme of memory that, as we have seen, was always so strongly associated with Christmas for him". (Sutherland)

Dickens' description of the western culture and the happy atmosphere before Christmas is far more entertaining than the story itself. In the Victorian age when *A Christmas Carol* was first published, the festival of Christmas was not well-known to many people. However, Dickens intended to teach his readers some morals and how humans have the choices to change their lives for good, which is typically manifested in the character of Scrooge and the presence of the Christmas ghost who appealed to his better nature and that what makes the novel the best literary piece to cover the wonders of Christmas and the western culture crafted by the hands of its master.

2. The Marxist Approach in Literature

2.1 A Sociological Study

The study of the sociological background of a literary work can enlighten the treatment of its themes. In their book *Critical Approach to Literature (1995)*, Kennedy and Gioia state: “in order to understand a work of literature, readers should investigate the social, cultural, and intellectual context that produced” (645). This approach must incorporate all of these elements in order to reveal the impact of society in the novel.

In their book *Literary Criticism: A Graphic Guide (2015)*, Owen Holland and Piero introduce the Marxist theory and its relation to literature. Holland & Piero define the Marxist literary theory as “a strategic orientation and critical methodology, which aims to transform collective social life. Karl Marx’s followers aspire towards the supersession of the capitalist mode of production” (168). Additionally, “Marxists investigate ways in which the economic organisation of capitalist society, oriented around competition and exploitation, produces social and class divisions. Most thinkers influenced by the Marxist movement regard capitalism as an unstable phase in the continuing development of human history” (Holland & Piero, 168). In light of this context, The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms defines the term Marxist Criticism as:

“A tradition of literary and aesthetic interpretation and commentary derived from the principles of Marxism ‘historical materialism’, and thus tending to view literature in the light of modes of production (feudal, capitalist) and their property relations and class struggles. Little in this tradition derives directly from the writings of Karl Marx and his collaborator Friedrich Engels, who provided no developed aesthetic theory, although they expressed doubts about the value of propagandist fiction and thus discouraged the simple judgement of literary works according to the degree of socialist sentiment they express”. (272)

Marx's ideologies never gained their due momentum until his death. His ideas profoundly influenced later fiction writers. Among the most popular voices was Dickens. As quoted in Chakraberty (29), Marx himself wrote of Dickens and the contemporary novelists as "the present splendid brotherhood of fiction writers in England, whose graphic and eloquent pages have issued to the world more political and social truths than have been uttered by all the professional politicians and moralists put together" (Ami E. Stearns & Thomas J. Burns). For the most part, Karl Marx was a German philosopher, author and social theorist. Marx's ideas have had a huge impact on societies, most prominently in communist projects such as those in the USSR, China, and Cuba. Among modern thinkers, Marx is still very influential in the fields of sociology and political economy (Kenton). His works altered the course of life of the middle class and led to revolutionary strikes, among them is the infamous Bolsheviks' Revolution in Russia which overthrew Tsar Nicholas II and ended the 300 years rule of the Romanovs forever in 1918.

In his book *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (2006), Eagleton states that Marxist criticism analyzes literature in terms of historical conditions which produce it. Thus, it is clearly inadequate to give an account of a Marxist critic without examining the historical factors that shape it (Eagleton 2). He adds : "Marxist criticism is a part of a larger body of theoretical analysis which aims at understanding ideologies , values and feelings by which men experience their societies at various times" (2). He also identifies the relationship between Marxism and literature in terms of form and style. He says:" Marxist criticism is not merely sociology of literature concerned with how novels get published and whether they mention the working class. It is rather an explanation of a literary work through a sensitive attention to its forms, styles, and meanings" (2).

2.2 The Influence of Marxism on Charles Dickens' Writings

This approach tackles the analysis of the content of the novel in relation to its social and political reference and with its indigenous audience, the Victorians. In this light, Subagyo identifies the bond between Charles Dickens literature and Karl Marx's ideologies. He states: "in his novels, Dickens delivers important social messages through his empathetic characters living lives of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, and exploitation under the so-called capitalistic system. These underclass people holler their plight of injustice and crises of the actual social milieu" (36).

Subagyo reinforces that in the Marxist perspective, these multiple crises are embedded in themes of exploitation, class consciousness, sacrifice and revolution. Hence, the realism disguised under literary devices could hopefully accomplish dual purposes, both as a means of provoking a new kind of "social consciousness" among the bourgeoisie and as a means of raising the proletariat's class consciousness (36). Being from a middle class family, Dickens' writings were first and foremost addressed to change the reality of the English society and depict a larger truth with a series of fictional episodes.

The majority of Dickens's works are considered Marxist. Karl Marx is well known of his conflicts with the upper class. Therefore, He encouraged the elimination of differences between these classes. Throughout the course of his life, Dickens stranded as a social reformer as many of his literary works contributed to the enactment of important laws such as the law of preventing children under the age of twelve from working and the law of imprisonment for debts. Many considered Dickens to be the spokesperson for the poor, marginalized, and oppressed. A statue of this great writer was inaugurated in Yurtsmouth, Britain, where he was born, in honor of him as a human being before he was a writer.

Dickens believed in the ethical and political potential of literature and the novel in particular. He treated his fiction as a springboard for debates about moral and social reform. In his novels of social analysis, Dickens became an outspoken critic of unjust economic and social condition. His deeply-felt social commentaries helped raise the collective awareness of the reading public. Dickens contributed significantly to the emergence of public opinion which gained an increasing influence on the decisions of the authorities. Indirectly, he contributed to a series of legal reforms including the abolition of the inhuman imprisonment for debts, purification of the magistrates' courts, a better management of criminal prisons, and the restriction of the capital punishment.

2.3 Marxist Features in a Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens is well known as one of the most prolific and influential authors of the Victorian period. His works often addressed the deep sense of injustice that burdened Dickens. He spent his life bringing attention to the social stratification of Victorian society and the poverty and destitution that plagued those at the bottom of it. In *A Christmas Carol* (1843), Dickens emphasises on the social condition of England at the end of the nineteenth century. Masters as the capitalist heads and employers as lower class workers. Dickens wants to represent the social status and the problems that were faced at that time. In his journal article entitled *Capitalism with a Conscience: A Marxist Echo Found Voice in Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol"* (2014), academic Puja Chakraberty describes the Marxist reflection in Dickens' work *A Christmas Carol*. He states: "apart from being a pivotal voice of Marxist ideologies, it harbours a simple message, which is that capitalism can coexist with a self-conscience" (29).

According to Chakraberty, Dickens's big attempt was to stimulate the conscience of the capitalist so as to draw his attention to the harsh reality reflected in the lives of his

surroundings (29). The main protagonist of the novel Ebenezer Scrooge depicted the greedy capitalist. As a selfish old man, Scrooge became completely lonely after the death of his friend Jacob Marley, a friend with whom he shared a life under the shadow of misery and low standards. As a character, Scrooge's self isolation from his family and the way he treated his loyal clerk Bob Cratchit, represented nothing, but the fragile bond between people of the same society, and that of Capitalism and injustice. As portrayed in the famous Arthurian poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Dickens' book was not a mere Christmas book as it should be. It is rather a prospective story that used Christmas and seasonal spirit to tell a moral message. Also, the impoverished state of London in Dickens' lifetime later inspired the story. Chakraberty describes Dickens' story as "charmingly amusing as it is a scathing satire on contemporary social and economic conditions of England" (31). By the creation of Ebenezer Scrooge, Dickens wanted to shed light on the unconscious and exploitation of the bourgeoisie and provided a just solution to these problems by the end of the story.

Dickens portrays the underclass struggle in the novella. "By the time "By the time of Dickens's story, poverty was a spectacle rather than a visible reality for many members of the middle and upper classes" (Jaffe 264 , as cited in Subagyo 38). According to Jaffe (264), the capitalism produced so much distance between the classes. "It is not with human eyes that the spirit lets Scrooge see Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim, but through the eyes of his class" (Subagyo 38).

Conclusion

With regard to what mentioned above, the elements of the novel are clearly matched with the Marxist perspective which this novel is analysed upon in the third chapter of this research. The present paper endeavours to explore the plausibility of this fact with reference to Dickens's timeless novella. Furthermore, A Christmas Carol with its funny plot and unrevealed secrets proves to be a story of morals rather than a mere Christmas book .The next chapter of this research deals with the corpus study of the character of Ebenezer Scrooge and his reflections on the novel through a descriptive analysis from a Marxist approach.

CHAPTER THREE: Corpus Analysis

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CHAPTER THREE

Corpus Analysis

Introduction

A Christmas Carol is by far a call to awake the lost humanity as Dickens witnessed the neglecting of children after his visit to the raggedy school. The *classic* is divided into five staves embodying what the writer himself endured as an exploited child and as an appeal to provide help for the uncared such as the poor, children, and women. In this chapter, the researcher attempts to analyze the themes of the novels, Greediness and Forgiveness through the character of Scrooge. Also, it attempts to shed light on the decline of values represented by the characters. Moreover, the chapter aims to explore the attitudes of Charles' Dickens as a social reformer towards the decline of values.

1. The Representation of the Decline of Values through Scrooge

A Christmas Carol opens with Ebenezer Scrooge in his chilly house on Christmas Eve. It was the hungry forties of the nineteenth century, huge distress among the working classes and a massive famine hit Ireland. The lonely hard heartedness man in his cold empty house was destined to be haunted. First by the ghost of Marley, his old friend and business collaborate, and then by the ghosts of the Christmas spirit. As a result of this visit, Scrooge's attitude towards the people in his life has changed for good (Sutherland).

Scrooge is a cold, miserly creditor whose redemption to kindness and selflessness forms the act of *A Christmas Carol*. Scrooge represents the Victorian rich people who differ from the poor people. Dickens states in stave 1:

“Oh! But he was a tight fisted hand at the grindstone, scrooge's squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinne! Hard and sharp as

flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas" (4).

A Christmas carol reflects the dialectical materialism. The difference in social status as the issues of this novel shows the first idea that comes from the arrogance of Ebenezer Scrooge. He shows off his richness and his high social with considering that Bob Cratchit is his clerk a poor man who is afraid of Scrooge. Dickens relates: "let me hear another sound from you," said Scrooge, 'and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation!"(10). Greedy people are often looked at as selfish and ignorant human beings, Ebenezer Scrooge is like that a greedy, selfish and lonely old man. Scrooge does not have a good character. He is a conceited hearted man who always assumes that poor people are troublesome and useless. It can be seen from his dialogue with the portly gentleman: "if they would rather die, said scrooge, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides –excuse me-I don't know that" (Dickens 13).

2. Charles Dickens' Attitudes towards the Decline of the Victorian Values

Dickens was a social reformer who knew that an open criticism of society's shortcomings would not help in spreading his opinion, and his readers would be rather offended. Therefore, he wraps his criticism in an entertaining Christmas story by inviting the readers to form their own understanding of what society was lacking. Dickens criticized the large division between the rich and the poor in the British society, where the wealthy were only interested in their financial gain and the poor ended up in workhouse or debtor's

prison. Subagyo states: “Dickens delivers important social messages through his empathetic characters living lives of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, and exploitation under the so-called capitalistic system. These underclass people holler their plight of injustice and crises of the actual social milieu” (36).

As mentioned before, Dickens disapproves the cruel treatment of children. In *A Christmas Carol*, he introduces Bob Cratchit’s son, Tiny Tim, as a small and disabled young boy to prompt his readers into feeling empathy and compassion towards children but also towards the entire underprivileged population. In addition, he confronts the upper class with their lack of private charity and the insufficiency of a welfare system from the government.

Even though there is not much money in the Cratchit’s home, it is filled with the spirit of Christmas and a small feast that everyone is very excited about the goose and the pudding. They make the most of their small festive and embrace the holiday for the fact that the entire family can be together. Dickens shows the humanity and the morale of the poor, reminding his readers that this is the most essential part of Christmas. Bob makes a toast in honour of Mr Scrooge thanking him for their dinner because without his work he could not have provided his meal for his family: “I’ll give you Mr. Scrooge, the founder of the feast” (*A Christmas Carol* 66).

Dickens’s novel is a reminder that the wealthy have a great Christmas feast, while the other part of the population live and work under horrific circumstances in workhouses. Not only poor men live in workhouses, but entire families as well as orphaned children. Dickens proposes schooling and religious education for these poor children, because those who live in filth will not see any hope and they will no longer have faith and believe in God. But giving them access to education and religious will give them the prospect of surviving and eventually overcoming their hardships (cf. Dickens, *Speeches* 255). In

addition to that, Dickens is a big advocate for public hygiene after having read about the living conditions of the poor in the 1830's, and after having experienced it himself when his family lived in a poorhouse. In a speech in London's Department of Health, Dickens supported the sanitary reform of 1851:

“I can honestly declare that the use I have since that time made of my eyes and nose have only strengthened the conviction that certain sanitary reforms must precede all other social remedies, and that neither education nor religion can do anything useful until the way has been paved for their ministrations by cleanliness and decency”.(254)

Dickens condemns the way many children had to survive in the overcrowded slums of London, and throughout his life he promoted the better treatment of children in many ways, notably by incorporating children's stories into his novels, for instance in two of his most famous works *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist*. Whilst *David Copperfield* is very likely based on Dickens's own life, he must have known that sad stories about poor and exploited children would certainly evoke sympathy and kindness in his readers, thereby being an effective tool in pointing out the deficits in society. Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* does not go into detail about the exploitation of child labour, it is merely mentioned that Bob Cratchit's daughter Martha works long hours at a stretch and his son Peter will soon be put to work to provide the family (cf. Dickens 67). Through the character of Tiny Tim, Dickens could persuade his readers to empathize with children in poor situations. He learned about poverty and disease in children from his own experience in the workhouse, and his dedication and his sense of obligation in all probability originated from his childhood.

The establishment of workhouses and debtor's prisons in the first place deemed the poor inferior and insignificant within society. Dickens rejects altogether any institutional management of the poor, in favour of a more natural, personal, and human relationship between the classes: "all are to be judged and treated according to their individual merit" (Stokes 712). However, individual merit had lost its meaning in a society that was growing to become a powerful nation because of their economic turnout. The need to achieve and preserve more and more money could be attributed to the capitalist spirit, which was very common because of the rise of the English industry and the new opportunities to make money.

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to analyse Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* and his interpretations of the decline of the Victorian values. It is not merely a novel about Christmas, but rather a harsh criticism of the population at the time and Dickens's disappointment with the lack of humanity. Having experienced society's cruel treatment of his father and of poor people in general, Dickens recognizes the growing divide between the wealthy and the poor, and he exposes selfishness and greed as dominant features of Victorian England.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

A Christmas Carol is Charles Dickens' attempt to show that there is different social status which happens in a society. Just as the case of the characters in *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens endured hardships from his early childhood until his late adulthood. The author wants to criticize English society at that time that lived in stratification by classifying the characters. Dickens builds his narratives including *A Christmas Carol* from Marxist perspective that is clearly manifested in his characters; Scrooge as the creditor who represents Capitalism. On the other hand, the proletariat as represented by his clerk, Robert Cratchit.

Dickens stresses an important issue which is greediness and the worship of money. A lot of people like Scrooge are eager to collect money neglecting the social status of their surroundings. Dickens also addresses the issue of the decline of values in Victorian society as a result of the rise of Capitalism, along with the emergence of the industrial revolution that changed the history of Britain forever. Furthermore, Dickens emphasizes that being a human has nothing to do with wealth and class rank. As Scrooge's personality grows so aggressive towards his social circle, he finally realizes that good can prevail over evil and pure human relations such as love, tender, and forgiveness are the essence of communities.

In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens addresses the theme of "people can change". Ebenezer Scrooge changes many times throughout the story. When he was young, he did not want to become like his father, who was selfish and had debts. For a while, Scrooge was a caring person, but unfortunately as he got older, he became very greedy and miserly. After the Ghosts take Scrooge on the journey, he changes again and becomes kinder and more generous. He even gives his employee Bob Cratchit a raise. Furthermore, Dickens elaborates on the importance of compassion, family, generosity and holidays as Scrooge

finally overcome his ego. At the end of the journey, Scrooge realizes that there is no place like home, which is family.

All in all, readers are drawn to texts that allow for stepping outside one's reality and experience, time, place, or people. At the same time one imagines himself or herself in these times; by using techniques that leave a vivid trace in their readers, writers, like Charles Dickens make it possible. The writers, who do this most skilfully, create characters such as Ebenezer Scrooge and the Cratchits that one misses spending time with when the final chapter is wrapped.

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ملخص

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى معالجة مشكلة تدهور القيم في إنجلترا الفيكتورية و الكشف عن الاختلاف في الحالة الاجتماعية كما ينعكس في كتاب ترنيمة عيد الميلاد. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تسليط الضوء على العوامل التي أدت إلى تدهور القيم الإنسانية في العصر الفيكتوري. كما تهدف إلى تحليل العناصر البنيوية للرواية على أساس النهج الماركسي. تهدف هذه الدراسة أيضًا إلى معرفة موقف الكاتب تشارلز ديكنز تجاه تدهور القيم. علاوة على ذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الإجابة على أسئلة البحث المحددة في بداية الدراسة والتي تشمل كيفية ظهور انعكاسات تدهور القيم في رواية ترنيمة عيد الميلاد. وفي هذا الصدد، يستخدم الباحث أسلوبًا نوعيًا لتحليل عناصر الرواية. البيانات المستخدمة في هذه الدراسة أولية وثانوية. مصدر البيانات الأساسي هو رواية ترنيمة عيد الميلاد. بينما مصادر البيانات الثانوية تتضمن مصادر أخرى ذات صلة بالمصدر الأساسي بما في ذلك الكتب والمقالات ومقالات موقع الويب حول سيرة المؤلف الإنجليزي تشارلز ديكنز وتاريخ بريطانيا والنهج الماركسي للأدب. تظهر نتائج البحث أن تشارلز ديكنز يستخدم مفهوم الوقت للتأكيد على حقيقة أن الناس يمكن أن يتغيروا عبر السنين كما هو الحال بالنسبة لسكروج. يعكس ديكنز أيضًا أن الاختلاف في الطبقات الاجتماعية يمكن القضاء عليه لأن يوم عيد الميلاد هو يوم سعيد لجميع الناس على حد سواء. في الختام، يبدو أن رواية ترنيمة عيد الميلاد تهدف إلى إيصال رسالة خفية حول أهمية القيم والمعايير الأخلاقية في بناء المجتمعات.

كلمات مفتاحية : الطبقات الاجتماعية، المقاربة الماركسية، القيم الفيكتورية، قراءات اجتماعية، تدهور القيم

